Freedom Watch™

Citizens Project

CFV Pushes New Policy for D-11

by Megan Day

Colorado for Family Values, which cost Colorado taxpayers millions of dollars with its ill-fated Amendment Two, now has its sights on School District 11 in Colorado Springs.

When the Palmer High student newspaper *The Lever* published articles on gay and lesbian teens in November, CFV responded with protest. When their efforts to restrict student rights failed, they launched a high-pressure campaign for a school policy on student sexual conduct.

In January CFV printed 130,000 postcards urging the District 11 School Board to enact a policy "for every aspect of school life" that promotes abstinence and affirms "traditional marriage." With the help of Focus on the Family, CFV attempted to pack the January 15 School Board meeting to encourage the Board to adopt this policy, set out on the next page.

When CFV's efforts to restrict student rights failed, they launched a high-pressure campaign about student sexual conduct.

This is CFV's latest attempt to get a public entity to enforce its restrictive version of "family values." CFV's proposal is not currently on the School Board's agenda.

The background

When the Palmer High student newspaper included articles on gay and lesbian teens in its November issue, there was considerable discussion in the community at large. By talking about the problems of gay teens, was the student paper advocating homosexuality? If the paper should be prevented from printing those articles, was that censorship?

As reported in the December *Freedom Watch*, community response at the next School Board meeting overwhelmingly supported the student newspaper and the student authors' rights to free speech. Among others, Citizens Project spoke in favor of freedom of expression for student publications.

Citizens Project spoke in favor of freedom of expression for student publications.

Following that controversy, the District 11 School Board decided to revise and update its student publications policy. The first policy draft restricted students' rights. But a later draft, which followed much input from Citizens Project and others, preserved the freedom of expression for students. That later policy draft was scheduled for discussion at the January 15 Board meeting.

CFV's campaign

Losing the battle to restrict student publications, CFV made bigger plans. Even as others promoted freedom of expression, CFV was formulating a

Continued on page 2

Where We Stand

The District 11 School Board faces two issues: the draft policy on student publications, and CFV's proposed sexual conduct policy.

Citizens Project applauds the proposed policy on student publications and urges the School Board to adopt it.

CFV's attempt to promote its agenda of censorship, using School Board meetings as a public forum, serves only to waste the District's time and money.

The policy supports freedom of expression in student publications. We commend the Board for its hard work in producing this policy.

In contrast, CFV's proposed policy on student sexual conduct is fatally flawed:

– It is unnecessary.

– It is deceptive and dangerous.

– It sidetracks the School Board from more pressing issues.

We must remember that CFV's proposal came in reaction to the Palmer High student newspaper articles on gay and lesbian teens. While we don't deny CFV's concern for teenagers, their campaign for a sexual conduct policy was not the result of a rise in teenage promiscuity, STD's or pregnancies. You can see CFV's true motivations in their mission statement on page three.

Current District 11 policies already promote abstinence. Current policies also allow parents full access to curriculum materials and provide for exemptions from class material that might be personally objectionable. CFV's attempt to promote its agenda of censorship, using School Board meetings as a public forum, serves only to waste the District's time and money and to detract from the needs of our students.

We urge the School Board to reject further consideration of CFV's flawed sexual conduct policy.

Having said that, let us be clear: we at Citizens Project share many of the concerns expressed in the CFV proposal.

We care deeply about reducing teen pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases. We care about reducing the often severe crises of self-esteem that can be associated with early sexual activity. And, of course, we know of no one who promotes promiscuity for our children.

We note and support the abstinence-based policies that District 11 already has in place to help mitigate these problems. In addition, many of us devote individual time to deal more directly with these and other educational concerns in our community.

We urge our community to come together to support District 11 at this time. We urge the Board to focus on more immediate and pressing issues like managing bond monies and implementing state-wide educational standards.

Working from common ground, let's help District 11 provide a fair and equal education for all students. CFV's proposed policy will only hurt our schools and further polarize our community. **CP**

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New Political Activism

Christian conservatives mobilize to take over the local Republican Party, says party Chairman Bob Gardner.

Read all about it on page 5

CFV and D-11, Continued

restrictive student sexual conduct policy that would preempt all future discussions of homosexuality in the school system.

In preparation for the January 15 Board meeting (although the issue was not on the Board's agenda), CFV distributed its 130,000 postcards to members and supporters. They distributed in and through more than 100 local churches. These cards promoted a new school policy on student sexual conduct.

Focus on the Family's James Dobson interviewed Will Perkins on his national radio broadcast and urged local listeners to support CFV's policy.

"Protect the Children," each postcard declared. Printed underneath was: "I strongly urge you to enact a policy for every aspect of school life which discourages experimentation with any kind of promiscuous sexual activity, promotes abstinence, and affirms traditional marriage." The address of the District 11 School Board was pre-printed on the postcard.

In an interesting break from tradition, Focus on the Family's James Dobson preempted his regular national radio broadcast on January 7 with a *special 30-minute interview with* CFV Chairman Will Perkins discussing CFV's new "family values" campaign in District 11. He urged his local listeners to support CFV's policy.

Dr. Dobson had never taped a show targeting the Colorado Springs area before, although Focus on the Family had previously supported CFV in its Amendment 2 campaign.

At CFV's urging, the District 11 School Board moved their January 15 meeting to the larger auditorium at Wasson High School. CFV expected the crowd to exceed the 1,200 person capacity of the auditorium and had plans for a P.A. system for the overflow.

CFV even wanted to place a Hollywood-style "sky spotlight" outside the high school to attract attention to the meeting. The city, however, turned down that request.

The Board meeting

The result of all these preparations? Of the 700 people who attended the January 15 School Board meeting, between one-third and one-half supported the new student publications policy (which was the agenda item for that meeting) and opposed CFV's new sexual conduct policy.

By the time of the meeting, the School Board had received only 1,400 of the 130,000 pre-printed CFV postcards.

Most of the two hours of public input to the Board was devoted to statements on CFV's proposal for abstinence and traditional marriage.

In a departure from protocol, Kent Olvey, president of the Board, asked four speakers to lead the public input segment. Those were Mary Margaret Nussbaum, student and author of the *Lever* article, CFV chairman Will Perkins, Frank Whitworth of Ground Zero, and Citizens Project Board member and D-11 parent Jody Alyn. Jody's comments to the Board are set forth on page three.

CFV and Focus on the Family want to get the School District committed to promoting "traditional marriage."

The statement of student editor Mary Margaret Nussbaum to the Board was very apt: "We strive to make it known through our words that just as the star of the football team and the class valedictorian are part of our school, so too are kids who run away and kids training for the Olympics, girls who get pregnant, and international science fair winners– and so too are teenagers who are homosexual."

Mike Miles also spoke to the Board about the historical difficulties of "traditional values." His statement is on page four.

The result

Following the public input segment, the Board members expressed their views. With the exception of Board member Art Nutter, all indicated that they supported the student publications policy under consideration. Board member Lyman Kaiser described the dedicated efforts of the policy subcommittee in preparing that policy, the common ground that linked many viewpoints, and the state law with which the policy must comply.

A final decision on the student publications policy is likely to be made at the January 29 Board meeting.

Responding to CFV's proposed sexual conduct policy, many Board members noted that current District policies already promote abstinence and address other concerns expressed in the CFV proposal. The Board did not take any action on CFV's proposed policy.

At the present time, CFV's proposed policy is not on the agenda of any future District 11 School Board meeting. It remains to be seen whether Perkins can get the Board to consider or adopt his policy.

What does it mean?

When asked what his proposed sexual conduct policy really would change, Perkins has given different answers.

At one point, he said CFV's proposal was designed to cover "every aspect of student life" and would restrict what teachers could teach and what students could write or talk about.

A general policy promoting "traditional marriage" could have many unexpected effects in the school system.

Later, he said that the policy would not have any effect except to stop teachers from promoting promiscuity or advocating gay marriage.

Will Perkins may not be clear about his policy's likely impacts, or he simply may be reluctant to be explicit.

The bottom line

As is so often the case with CFV proposals, the Devil resides in the details. Stripped to its basics, the CFV proposal promotes two things: sexual abstinence and traditional marriage.

However, District 11 policies on sex education are already abstinence-based.

The key change, and the reason that CFV and Focus on the Family want this new policy passed by the School Board, is to get School District 11 committed to promoting "traditional marriage."

With that, CFV can advance its anti-gay agenda in District 11 schools. Student discussions of homosexuality? There would be a CFV-led clamor that they violated the District's policy of promoting traditional marriage. The same with future articles on gays in student publications and gay student groups.

A vague District policy for "traditional marriages" would open the door to censorship in school libraries, curricula, classroom discussions, and student publications.

If it could only promote traditional marriage, could the District hire gay or lesbian teachers? How about single parents? Should the District fire or reassign teachers if it became known later that they are gay or lesbian, or if they become unmarried parents or divorced?

With help from CFV and its supporters, a general policy of promoting "traditional marriage" could have many unexpected effects on the District 11 school system.

An recent incident in Pennsylvania shows that these concerns are not far-fetched. When the school board in Elizabethtown, Pa. adopted a "pro-family" policy last year, music teachers were forced to eliminate the popular song "YMCA" from the school band's repertoire. The reason: the Village People, the all-male group that popularized it, is associated with the "gay lifestyle."

The District 11 School Board should not give CFV carte blanche by adopting the very general language of their proposed policy, without first thinking through the chilling effects that it could have on our school system and students within the system. **CP**

What You Can Do

Here are some simple ways to make your voice heard to:

- **support the District 11 School Board,**
- **support the student publications policy,**
- **oppose censorship, and**
- **oppose CFV's unnecessary sexual conduct policy.**

CALL the District 11 Board directly at 520-2004.

WRITE to the School Board at the following address: School Board, District 11 Administration Building, 1115 N. El Paso, Colorado Springs, CO 80903.

FAX your concerns to the School Board office at 577-4546.

Please make your comments brief and to the point. Above all, be pleasant – the School Board members, who work hard, appreciate friendly suggestions and support far more than anger and condemnations.

But That Was Yesterday...

"I have only one string in my guitar, and that's Amendment Two."

– CFV's Will Perkins, June '92

"Join me in standing up for 'propaganda-free' Colorado schools."

– CFV's Will Perkins, February '96.

Citizens Project

Statement to the School Board

Citizens Project Board member Jody Alyn addressed the District 11 School Board at its January 15 meeting. Excerpts from her comments, a portion of which were quoted in the Gazette-Telegraph, are set forth below.

"My name is Jody Alyn. I come to you tonight once again as a parent of two elementary age children in District 11 and as a Board member of Citizens Project.

As a Citizens Project Board member, I represent at least 2,500 financial supporters (40% of whom are District 11 voters) and countless others. These supporters share our vision of a community committed to working beyond ignorance, prejudice and fear; a community where differences are respected, individual rights are protected, and diversity is celebrated.

The student publications policy

"Once again, congratulations are in order – to the District 11 School Board generally, and to the policy subcommittee specifically–for their handling of the policy matters under consideration tonight. You have maintained an open door in drafting the proposed publications policy. You have listened to a wide variety of public opinion and kept the public well-informed of your progress.

The result appears to be a fair and balanced student publications policy, consistent with state law and appropriately protective of students' rights to free speech. We commend the Board for their efforts under intense public scrutiny.

Citizens Project supports the Board in adopting the student publications policy drafted on December 11 and including the revisions of January 8.

CFV and censorship

"In contrast, we strongly oppose the unnamed sexual conduct policy proposed by CFV. This policy is unnecessary. Dr. Olvey [Board president] described in detail the ways in which legitimate concerns expressed by this proposal are already addressed by the District policy. Beyond unnecessary, this proposal is deceptive and dangerous. This policy is not about teaching morality or values. It is about condemnation of difference and restriction of individual rights. The CFV proposal is yet another thinly veiled attempt at sweeping censorship.

Beyond unnecessary, this proposal is deceptive and dangerous.

The CFV proposal arises from the controversy over the *Lever* articles [in the Palmer High student newspaper]. It stems from intolerance: from personal beliefs that we should not acknowledge homosexuality; that our children should not be allowed to identify or talk about the experiences of gay students. To the District 11 School Board we say, "Do not legitimize this proposal with time, attention, or taxpayer money."

The CFV proposal is yet another thinly veiled attempt at sweeping censorship.

The values at issue

"I believe that most people in District 11 share certain moral values and personal convictions with Mr. Perkins. I personally hope my children will choose abstinence. I care deeply about reducing teen pregnancies, reducing sexually transmitted diseases, and reducing the often deep-seated crises of self-esteem that are associated with early sexual activity. And I would challenge anyone here to name one parent, teacher, or administrator in District 11 who promotes sexual promiscuity.

We must refuse to polarize and politicize our school district.

But the roots of all these problems are deep. The solutions are complex. Should District 11 address these issues? YES! Should they consider CFV's policy? NO!

"Do not legitimize this proposal with time, attention, or taxpayer money."

These things cannot be addressed by a vague, "overall" policy that ignores complexities, that censors information and opinion, and that denies the value – and indeed the health – of difference and diversity in a well-functioning society.

The right to speak

"Let me be clear on one issue. No matter how reprehensible the ideas in CFV's policy may be to me, no matter how abhorrent the expression, I will defend to the death anyone's right to express them.

I expect no less fierce protection of those same rights – unabridged – for myself, for my children, and for all other children in the District.

Just say "no" to intolerance

"Citizens Project urges the District 11 community to come together now to support the District at this crucial time. We must refuse to polarize and politicize our school district. We must say "NO" to intolerance and to efforts like CFV's proposal that sidetrack us from our mission.

We can find and work from our common ground. From common ground, we can develop true solutions to the complex problems facing students and educators today. From common ground, we can work together to promote and achieve excellence in all aspects of student life and equal educational opportunity for all our children.

Thank you. **CP**

CFV's Mission and Faith Statements

Here are CFV's mission statement and statement of faith, reproduced verbatim from CFV's publications:

CFV's Mission Statement:

The mission of Colorado for Family Values is to:

- proactively lead and assist those opposing the militant homosexual attack on traditional values;
- to act as a resource equipping grassroots efforts through education and training of like-minded organizations and individuals across America dedicated to preserving the fundamental freedoms of speech, association, assembly, belief and conscience protected by Colorado's Amendment Two;
- to preserve the right to disagree with and resist, in a civil and compassionate manner, the forced affirmation of the homosexual lifestyle.

CFV's Statement of Faith:

We are committed to the behavioral standards as enunciated in the Holy Scriptures, both Old and New Testaments, as encompassed in the Judeo-Christian ethic and demonstrated by the life of Jesus Christ.

CFV's Proposed Sexual Conduct Policy

This is the policy which Colorado for Family Values is requesting that the District 11 School Board adopt. CFV's official mission statement follows the policy statement.

The Board of Education of Colorado Springs School District #11 recognizes that a permissive attitude of sexual promiscuity in our society today has led to devastating social ills, including the rise of sexually transmitted diseases and teen pregnancy. The Board of Education further realizes that these social ills can be lessened with students learning the benefits from sexual abstinence and the virtues associated with traditional marriage.

Unless contrary to the provisions of federal or state law, the Board of Education in Colorado Springs School District #11 directs that in areas of curriculum, instruction, and student environment involving issues of sex education, health, inter-personal relationships, or any other related areas of sexual content, that students shall be instructed in the deleterious effects of experimental and promiscuous sexual activity and shall be further instructed on the benefits arising from sexual abstinence and traditional marriage.

The Board of Education of Colorado Springs School District #11 further acknowledges that this policy is designed to complement and not supplant the traditional role of the family in providing guidance and nurturance to children on these issues.

The Superintendent is authorized to establish necessary procedures to implement the purposes of this Policy.

Citizens Project

Enduring Values

by F. Mike Miles

In times of rapid change people instinctively seek something to hold on to. They drop anchor, fearing to be set adrift in waves of new technology and shifting mores.

It seems we need the firmness of tradition to help us make sense of the world, to help us deal with new information or the unfamiliar – the communications explosion, geneticism, immigrants resisting assimilation, homosexuality. Tradition is important.

Thus, the "traditional values" supported by Colorado for Family Values resonate in many members of this community. Anger towards homosexuality seems to be one manifestation of CFV's attempt to keep their tradition intact and undoubtedly seems justified from their point of view.

But such a point of view is based on fear and invalid claims to be the keepers of our shared values.

A painful history

Tradition is important, but whose values are we to follow? Claiming to represent traditional practices, people in this country once tried to keep blacks from using the same bathrooms or restaurants as whites.

Had we been lured by the siren song of traditional values, we would have denied women the right to vote and would have denied them the opportunity to proudly serve our country as pilots and astronauts. Traditional values drove Native-Americans onto reservations.

A lot of pain has been inflicted on minorities everywhere because of an inflexible adherence to someone's or some group's traditional values.

The keepers of these sorts of traditional values should consider the transience of some of their present views.

Timeless values

Our history respects not tradition based on provincial customs, but that which reflects the breadth of this nation's peoples. Our history respects not the values of an era, but those that have spoken to generations of Americans as free people.

Tradition is important, but I know of no traditional values that have endured except the ones based on justice and humanity.

And while I hold all "traditional values" suspect, I support those embedded in the oldest written constitution still in use, the United States Constitution; a Constitution in which free speech is guaranteed and equal protection under the law sacrosanct.

I support a way of life backed by a system of law and by numerous Supreme Court decisions that have protected minorities from oppression and injustice. I support the values voiced centuries ago by a prophet who welcomed both Jews and gentiles, the weak and oppressed, warning man not to reject the commandment of God for the sake of blind tradition.

Looking at District 11

"Whose traditional values?" is a question this community will continually face as it grows. Issues such as District 11's student publication policy and, perhaps now, a student conduct policy will test our core philosophy with regard to fundamental rights and values.

Other issues concerning minorities and the disadvantaged will also test our support for human rights. Now, as society becomes more diverse and its problems more complex, it is even more important to approach the question of values from a broad perspective.

Let us hoist anchors, not drop them. Let us put to sea with sails of tolerance and rudders crafted by the common good.

Now is the time for leadership. District 11's School Board showed leadership in drafting a student publication policy that will preserve freedom of expression for students.

As a community, we need other leaders who will take a similar stand for human rights. We need leaders who will enter the debate on the side of justice and humanity.

For in the absence of true leadership by elected officials, the community will be dominated by those with money and a personal agenda. And the "traditional values" they promote will bring injustices to many.

Mike Miles is a government teacher at Fountain-Ft. Carson High School and vice-chair of the Pikes Peak Human Relations Coalition.

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SPECIAL THANKS

to our Sustaining Partners,
our new and renewing members,
and all our other contributors.

We would not be here without your support!

Now, more than ever,
Citizens Project is needed
in our community.

If you have not had a chance to join or to renew your membership ... well, rest assured that we need you and your support. Please take a minute to fill in the box on page eight. Thanks from all of us.

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Citizens Project

Local Republican "True Conservatives" Mobilize

In a bold and unprecedented bid for increased visibility in the local Republican Party, 100 "true conservatives" met January 13 at Cheyenne Mountain Charter Academy to elect a special slate of candidates to run for local Republican "bonus member" slots.

El Paso Republican Chairman Bob Gardner described this meeting as the mobilization of conservative Christian activists trying to take control of the Republican Party. He described them as "3 R's, for radical, religious, right."

A rigid orthodoxy

This "private meeting" of Republican precinct committee members in El Paso County was organized and led by Carrie Gordon, a public policy researcher for Focus on the Family. She said she invited "true conservatives," which she defined as Republicans who are both "fiscal and social conservatives."

Although not invited, Chairman Gardner attended what he called this "secret meeting." He described the "true conservative" group as a "faction" within the local Republican Party which promotes a "rigid orthodoxy."

The "3R" slate of candidates had to sign a pre-printed pledge of ideological purity.

Organizer Carrie Gordon denied that her meeting was associated with the Republican Party and denied that participants wanted to take over the local Republican organization. She also denied that the meeting was connected with her employer Focus on the Family.

At the meeting, Gordon handed out a written agenda and said that there would be no deviation from the agenda and no discussions. The purpose of the meeting, she said, was to elect a group of like-minded candidates.

The group elected a slate of 20 people who pledged in writing to promote and support a platform of social conservatism. These 20 people will run for election to be Republican bonus members when the El Paso County Republican Central Committee meets on February 10.

According to Bob Gardner, bonus members sit on the county executive committee for the Republican Party and are representatives to the Republican state central committee. "These are people who influence the direction, the organization, and the philosophical bent of the party."

An unprecedented action

Local Republicans noted that this is the first time that anyone has ever organized to run a slate of candidates for the bonus member slots in El Paso County.

Under the rules of the Republican Party, larger counties receive "bonus members" as a reward for high Republican voter turnout. El Paso County and Jefferson County each are allotted 20 Republican bonus members, the highest in the state.

Political insiders speculate that similar "true conservative" meetings are being held in other counties with strong conservative Republican factions, such as Jefferson, Arapahoe and Douglas counties. The aim, they speculate, is to increase the influence of socially conservative Republicans in the state Republican Party, and perhaps eventually to dominate the party.

The pledge

In another first, the "3R" slate of candidates at the January 13 meeting had to sign a pre-printed pledge of ideological purity. Each candidate had to pledge to support planks from the national GOP platform and to "vote only for officers of our Party who will do the same."

The economic part of the pledge required candidates to oppose high taxes and to support a Balanced Budget Amendment to the Constitution and a "common-sense approach" to government rules and red tape.

The social part of the pledge was considerably more detailed. Each candidate pledged to support the Defense of Marriage Act, a ban on partial-birth abortions, the right of parents to direct the upbringing of their children, and the sanctity of human life. Each candidate also pledged to support gun ownership and choice in schooling, among other positions.

This written pledge is the common currency of these new ultra-conservative activists within the Colorado Republican Party. By contrast, more traditional Republicans, while supporting economic conservatism, are less likely to agree with the emphasis on governmental regulation of personal lives as called for by these social conservatives.

Gardner described this meeting as the mobilization of conservative Christian activists trying to take control of the Republican Party.

The new Christian conservatives view the more moderate "big tent" traditional Republicans as unprincipled, too moderate, and too inclusive.

[You read an in-depth analysis of this political division and its implications in last month's *Freedom Watch*.]

The audience

Nearly 100 people attended Gordon's "private meeting" at the Charter Academy. Participants in the audience included Christian Coalition members, Focus on the Family employees, Colorado Right to Life activists, and patriot-constitutionalists, among others.

Nearly 100 people attended Gordon's "private meeting" at the Charter Academy.

The more prominent included Representative Doug Lamborn; Colorado Christian Coalition Director (and El Paso County Christian Coalition Chairman) Chuck Gosnell; Jan Porter, a past supporter of State Senator Charles Duke and legislative aide to Representative Doug Dean; David Stiver, a candidate for Colorado Springs City Council and former campaign worker for Congressman Joel Hefley; newly-elected County Commissioner Betty Beedy; Bob Bagley, former county director of the Colorado Coalition of Firearms; and several members of City Councilwoman Cheryl Gillespie's campaign for mayor of Colorado Springs.

In addition, several parents with children enrolled at Cheyenne Mountain Charter Academy attended the meeting.

Participants included Christian Coalition members, Focus on the Family employees, Colorado Right to Life activists, and patriot-constitutionalists.

The candidates

Carrie Gordon's agenda called for a twenty-person slate of candidates, ten men and ten women. When Gordon called for candidates, ten women and 14 men responded. All ten women became candidates automatically, while a vote was necessary for the men.

The ten women are Linda Stahnke (legislative reporter for local radio talk show host Chuck Baker), Ann Sullivan, Diana Stiver (wife of city council candidate David Stiver), Bonnie Shepard, Maeta Godwin (assistant to Tom Minnery at Focus), Cheri Ofner (a fundraiser for Congressman Hefley's reelection campaign), Cindy Murphy (a volunteer in Wayne Allard's Senate campaign), Peggy Littleton, Connie Pratt (a leader in the El Paso County Right to Life chapter), and Sharon Bath (vice-president of Colorado for Family Values and past participant in Christian Coalition's national Road to Victory conference).

The men elected to the slate are Kevin Tebedo (founder of Colorado for Family Values and now director of Colorado Homeschoolers), Tom Minnery (vice-president at Focus on the Family), Bill Cadman (aide to Congressman Hefley), Phil Corson (1992 Buchanan delegate), Bob Linden, John Vandermuelen, Patrick McGuire, Rich Brenner, Ken Bull, and Conrad Gutierrez.

The upcoming election

The election for "bonus members" is February 10 at the meeting of the El Paso County Republican Central Committee.

Republican County Chairman Bob Gardner estimates that the newly mobilized "true conservative" faction makes up less than 30% of the local Republican Party.

If that is the case, a win by this newly united and ideologically committed Christian conservative slate in the February 10 election will be dramatic evidence of a rising influence of the hard right in our local Republican Party organization. Even in losing, this united slate will have an impact on the public's perception of the capabilities of local far *right activists and politicians.*

Tom Minnery, vice-president of Public Policy at Focus on the Family, is also running to be vice-chairman of the El Paso County Republican Party. He is strongly backed by former Senator Bill Armstrong.

The charter school

An interesting sidelight involves the Cheyenne Mountain Charter Academy, a charter school with School District 12.

Bob Gardner sits on the Board of Directors of the Charter Academy. In a January 17 *Cheyenne Edition* article, Gardner was described as upset that the Christian conservatives had their meeting in the charter school.

He was concerned, he said, because of the "perception within the community that the charter school is some sort of Cheyenne Mountain Christian Academy."

Although some of the charter school parents have asked for Christian prayers in the mornings and pictures of Jesus on the walls, Gardner said he has spent "a great deal of time and energy to insure that it is both in spirit and in fact a public, non-sectarian, non-religious school." CP

This article was prepared with the assistance of local journalist Leslie Jorgensen.

Citizens Project

Promise Keepers Generate Controversy: Are Family Values Becoming Political?

Direct authority and tight accountability make Promise Keepers a significant force in America today.

by Nancy Novosad

Promise Keepers mobilize for their seventh and most ambitious conference season amidst increasing controversy.

Questions about the impropriety of U.S. Navy sponsorship of a Promise Keepers "Wake-Up Call" – scheduled for November 1996 at the Norfolk Naval Base – caused the Navy to withdraw sponsorship of the event. At issue was whether the Navy's apparent official endorsement created a church-state conflict.

An authoritarian structure

The incident highlighted the little known but significant synergy between the military and Promise Keepers. The organization's highly authoritarian structure evolved out of a military command and control model dependent on cell group accountability.

Authority runs in a direct line of command from Promise Keepers national headquarters to battalion leaders, called "ambassadors," to squad commanders, called "key men," then man to man to man to man – ad infinitum – networking from without thousands of churches across the country.

Working within this paradigm are the "shepherding and discipleship" principles and "covenant relationship." Promise Keepers agree to be accountable in all aspects of their lives to Promise Keeper peers – their relationship with God, their commitment to their family, their sexuality, their finances and their relationship to all other believers and non-believers.

All are scrutinized, directed, and overseen by Promise Keepers accountability partners.

Prepared for battle

This direct authority and tight accountability helps make Promise Keepers a significant force in America today.

When Bill McCartney, then head coach of the University of Colorado's national championship football team, publicly hoisted the Promise Keepers standard in 1991, he issued a call to men to move against a "corrupt and deceived culture" decimated by an "effeminate society."

Quoting First Corinthians 14:8, McCartney said this was a "preparation for battle."

The battle was joined at Promise Keepers '93 in Boulder – a catalytic stadium event that drew 52,000 men. "We're calling you to war," McCartney said. "We demolish arguments and every pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we capture every thought to make it obedient to Christ ... We have divine power... We have a holy cause."

"By the year 2000, the strongest voice in America, a booming voice, is going to belong to the men of God," he said. "The greatest promise any man can make to himself is He must increase and I must decrease. We've got to surrender, yield, and obey and allow this King of Kings and Lord of Lords to come in and take over our lives. It's a whole new way to live and die."

To take the nation

What's the goal? "To secure from within the boundary and rid the land from within of all compromises of the demonic practices of the people of the land," according to Randy Phillips, President of Promise Keepers.

> *"Whoever will stand with the Messiah will rule with him ... How strong is your commitment to the blood? Stand with us in the blood's lamb and we'll take this nation for Jesus."*
>
> **— Bill McCartney, founder of Promise Keepers, 1996**

Pat Robertson, in an interview on the *700 Club*, asked McCartney about the exponential growth of Promise Keepers and what he saw for the future.

Robertson was referring to the veritable army of men – 1.1 million of them last year – who gather April through October in football stadiums across the country to stand "man to man, warrior to warrior, touching each other and building the Kingdom of God" under the Promise Keepers standard.

McCartney answered Robertson's question with a quote from Scripture. "Psalm 2:8 says of me, ask and I will give you the nation for your inheritance, the outermost parts of the earth for your possession. ..."

In October 1997, hundreds of thousands of Promise Keepers will gather in "Sacred Assembly" for a million man march in Washington DC. Their announced intention is to "take America for Christ" so they can "give the country back to God."

In October thousands of Promise Keepers will gather in "Sacred Assembly" for a march in Washington DC. Their announced intention is to "take America for Christ."

Through values to politics

Last May, in a live simul-cast from the Promise Keepers conference at RFK Stadium in Washington (47,351 men) to the Georgia Dome in Atlanta (64,500) – and with the Lincoln Memorial as a prominent backdrop – Randy Phillips discussed his concern about specific social issues facing America: "moral relativism," "lack of faith," "adultery," "divorce," "crime," and "racism."

America faces destruction from these social issues, Phillips implied, and called on Promise Keepers to stand in the gap so God "should not destroy it."

"How do we fight?" asked Colson. He provided the answer: "Politics."

During the 1996 Promise Keepers conference season, these and other social agendas figured prominently and repeatedly.

At Eugene, Oregon, John Hagee, a San Antonio evangelist, mentioned abortion, prayer in public schools, Supreme Court decisions, welfare, hedonism, secularism, multiculturism, the lottery, the discipline of children, taxes, and freedom of expression.

"It's time to take America back to the God of our fathers. To the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. Back to the Bible which is the absolute truth of the word of God," he said.

"The secular worldview today leads to inevitable chaos," Charles Colson, convicted felon and Christian evangelist, said at Promise Keepers '96 in Charlotte. He touched on a number of "hot button" court decisions and a variety of social and political issues, including youth and crime. "There's a direct result between the moral chaos in our society and the conditions in our society that we can't live with, and that creates for us an opportunity."

At one point in the meeting Colson asked rhetorically, "How do we fight?" He provided the answer: "Politics." He then offered kind words for North Carolina's Republican candidate for governor, Robin Hayes. "Thank God Christian men like this are in politics."

He chastised Governor Lawton Chiles of Florida for vetoing a bill that would have allowed student-led, student-initiated prayer in public schools, "I don't know what Constitution he's reading, but it isn't the one that I live by."

Support from the right

Promise Keepers has long-standing and highly politicized ties to a broad coalition of social, religious, financial, and political interests on the Christian extreme right.

The trajectory of this coalition includes Dr. James Dobson of Focus on the Family, Bill Bright of Campus Crusade for Christ, D. James Kennedy of Coral Ridge Ministries, Charles Colson of Prison Fellowship, Pat Robertson of the Christian Coalition and *700 Club*, Jerry Falwell, formerly of the Moral Majority, Randall Terry of Operation Rescue, Beverly LaHaye of Concerned Women for America, and Gary Bauer of Family Research Council.

These groups support and promote Promise Keepers. Dobson, Colson, and Bright also speak at Promise Keepers conferences.

Keeping a low profile

In November 1996, Promise Keepers abruptly pulled a request to hold a conference in the Rose Bowl. This withdrawal came just hours before the Pasadena (California) City Council was scheduled to take public comment on their proposed May 1997 two-day event at the Rose Bowl.

Open debate and public scrutiny so threatened Promise Keepers that they opted to withdraw their request and remove the matter from Council's agenda, thus foreclosing public discussion – or so they thought.

Pasadena Mayor William Paparian nonetheless placed documentation about Promise Keepers on public record. "I'm absolutely sure that the men that attend these events are genuinely seeking to express their Christian faith," Paparian told the *Los Angeles Times*. "As a Christian I deeply respect that. My concern had to do with the extreme views and affiliations of the national leadership."

Growth and influence

Now in its seventh year, Promise Keepers continues to increase in size. With size comes influence.

Propelled by a battlefield rhetoric and mentality, the Promise Keepers show an increased interest in moving beyond an agenda of values and individual change toward a new agenda of political change.

Year by year, Promise Keepers is becoming a stronger player in the political debate about "traditional family values." **CP**

Nancy Novosad writes frequently about politics and culture, is a Consulting Editor for "PK Watch," a project of the Center for Democracy Studies of the Nation Institute, and is writing a book about the collision of politics, religion and culture in American society.

Family Friendly Libraries

by Piper Foster

"Parents, don't send your kids to the library alone. Obscene, adult and immoral literature lurks around every corner!"

That's the fear of Karen Jo Gounaud. Her new organization, Family Friendly Libraries (FFL), urges concerned citizens to get more involved with local libraries to promote high moral standards.

Family Friendly Libraries wants citizens to use libraries to promote high moral standards.

What does she envision as "family friendly" libraries? These would be libraries which "aid in the preservation of the traditional family" and give child protection highest priority.

For example, a "family friendly" library would remove or restrict access to materials about sexuality and about gays and lesbians. It would also emphasize "society building" publications like Bill Bennett's *Book of Virtues.*

Family Friendly Libraries, based in Virginia, is active in 43 states. It claims the support of Focus on the Family and Christian Coalition.

New library policies

Karen Jo Gounaud has clear ideas on how libraries should support traditional families.

First, because local libraries are part of our government, she believes they must help protect society. To do so, they must "acknowledge the importance and superiority of the traditional family" and be active in its preservation. The traditional family, according to Gounaud, is a "mother and father married to each other, committed to a lifetime monogamous relationship."

Although family friendly libraries can help single-parent households, divorced families, and "blended" families, they must always give precedence to the traditional family.

"Parental guidance" and "adult" books would be kept in a separate section accessible only to adults and minors accompanied by adults.

Second, libraries would classify all library materials, such classifications to include "parental guidance only" and "explicitly adult" categories. "Parental guidance" and "adult" books would be kept in a separate section of the library accessible only to adults and those under age 18 accompanied by adults.

Third, family friendly libraries would keep records of books that children check out. That will allow parents to review the materials to which their children have been exposed.

Fourth, displays of new books, seasonal celebrations, and special reading themes must never be such as to offend the sensibilities "of the libraries' youngest patrons."

The American Library Association is concerned about these proposed policies. ALA President Betty Turdock says that while the ALA supports a parent's right to monitor his or her child's reading material, "we simply feel that right does not extend to other people's children."

Intellectual freedom?

Karen Jo Gounaud is clear on one point: family friendly libraries are not about intellectual freedom. "While works discrediting and devaluing traditional family and traditional family values will not be automatically excluded.., there will be no mandate to give this proven destructive point of view equal time, space or emphasis for the sake of intellectual freedom."

"You don't have the right to read anything. We have to protect each other from dangerous material."

That's not censorship, says Gounaud, but "responsible sponsorship."

And libraries aren't about the right to read either, argues Phil Burress, an Ohio library trustee and fervent FFL supporter: "That's a bunch of hogwash. You don't have the right to read anything. We have to protect each other from dangerous material."

However, Gounaud also notes that family friendly libraries should offer diverse viewpoints using "reasoned but opposing" voices.

FFL concerns

In addition to her disgust that children have access to all library books, Gounaud has other concerns with public libraries today.

She worries that they are not keeping and displaying the "classic educational works of our civilization" such as Adam Smith's *Wealth of Nations* and the mathematical writings of Sir Issac Newton.

She objects to gay-theme books she sees in libraries, characterizing them as "rubbish." [Actually, Gounaud started Family Friendly Libraries after she discovered *The Washington Blade*, a gay newspaper, in her county library.]

She wonders about the qualifications of the people who run libraries. According to her, a library trustee "should be someone who understands that there is no constitutional mandate for the separation of church and state." Those who believe otherwise, she says, "need re-education."

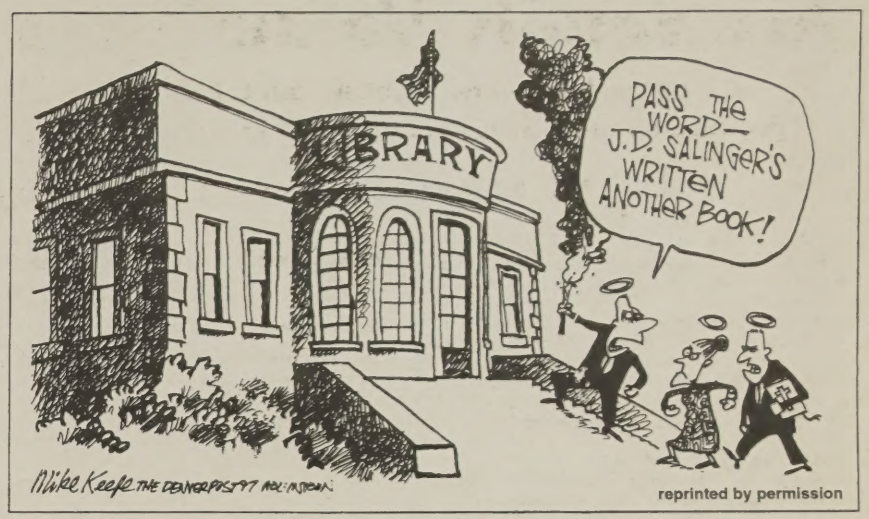
She is also concerned about professional groups like the American Library Association. Public libraries are community libraries, she argues, and a community should impose its own standards on book selection and display, rather than use professional standards.

Many of her views find common ground with other socially conservative organizations. She contributed to Focus on the Family's "Talking Points: Public Libraries" article, which appeared in the September 23, 1996 issue of Focus' *Citizen* magazine. She has also written for the *Lambda Report on Homosexuality.*

Gounaud said she has relied "heavily" on information from Focus on the Family.

What about our libraries?

In the Pikes Peak Library District, juvenile sections carry books of greater interest to children. These books are separated from others which some parents may feel are too mature or inappropriate. However, children are not restricted from any areas of the library.



So far, no one has objected to this.

Pam Killion, a Colorado Springs mother of two boys, ages eight and five, thinks this is appropriate. She feels that the quality of books her children have found in the kid's section is fine, and if her children were to stumble across material which could be offensive, the family can take it in stride.

"To me it is really about what goes on at home. If you educate your children at home with your family's own ethics, then you are giving them the tools to deal with issues that will come up in their lives. My children aren't going to be living in a bubble."

Gounaud sees gay-theme books as "rubbish."

Her husband Jerry agrees, "If Emerson happens upon a book on a mature subject, then it would be an opportunity for us to discuss it rationally."

Book selection

The Pikes Peak Library District buys about 100,000 new materials each year, which includes books, magazines, CDs, microforms and other materials. These materials are ordered in accordance with the library district's Collection Development Policy, under which 40 professional librarians use specific criteria to decide whether to add a book or other item to the collection.

The criteria include the book's local or national importance, the importance of the subject matter, and public demand.

"The library's responsibility is to provide all issues and all sides of the issue," said Nancy Downs, PPLD Public Information Officer. "It is the parents' responsibility to choose materials appropriate for their kids."

Local challenges

If a patron is concerned about the presence of a book in the Pikes Peak Library District, or even where it is shelved, that patron may "challenge" the book.

In the challenge process, the patron must say if he or she has read the entire book and then specifically describe any concerns. The patron is also asked to point out positive parts of the book and to include specific recommendations for the book.

In 1995, 13 books were challenged in the PPLD. These included *Anne of Green Gables*, *The Frog Prince*, and *Corruption.* No books were removed, although some were reshelved.

In 1996, eleven books were challenged, including *How to Write Erotica* and *Romeo and Juliet.* The challenged books are still under consideration by the library district.

Looking ahead

Karen Jo Gounaud and her FFL organization have not had much of an impact on Colorado Springs so far.

But now that Focus on the Family is echoing FFL's concerns, it may be only a matter of time before the local family values crowd decides to encourage our local libraries to play a more prominent role in promoting a conservative "traditional family values" agenda. **CP**

Citizens Project

Celebrate Diversity!

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Inside CP

CP in the news

The *Denver Post*, the *Rocky Mountain News* and the *Gazette Telegraph* all included comments about Citizens Project's involvement in the District 11 controversy. CP Director Megan Day and CP Board member Jody Alyn were quoted.

Jody Alyn was a guest on the KKTV noon show discussing the District 11 issues, along with Citizens Project volunteer and *Lever* staff member Piper Foster.

The *Pikes Peak Journal* published a feature article on Citizens Project in December. The Denver weekly newspaper *Westword* contacted CP for information on censorship in public libraries.

School District 11

Citizens Project heard early on about the new postcard campaign by CFV pushing District 11 to adopt a sexual conduct policy. Citizens Project alerted supporters and spoke at the School Board meeting on January 15 in favor of free expression and against censorship.

Join the CP Schools Network

Get involved and stay informed about local public school issues. All residents in the Pikes Peak area, with or without children in school, are welcome to join our Schools Network. We will contact you with information on issues and keep you informed of important meetings in your school district. Call the Citizens Project office at 520-9899.

Contribution appreciated

We would like to thank our fine supporter who donated $1,500 to enable us to publish this eight-page newsletter. With continued support from all our members, we are more effective in our mission in the Pikes Peak area. Our heartfelt thanks!

Announcements

Kindness Week celebration

The Kindness Campaign and the Pikes Peak Interfaith Council invite all to the Interfaith Celebration of Kindness. Representatives from ten different religious and spiritual traditions will speak about the role of kindness in their traditions. Music and dance selections will be included. The Celebration will be at Shove Chapel on the Colorado College campus Sunday evening, February 9 at 7:00 p.m.. Admission is free.

This is the "kick-off" for Kindness Week in Colorado Springs. For further information, please call Barry Weinhold at 262-3446, Efton Jiles at 685-4172, or Harvey Joyner at 633-7717.

Tree of the Village

Thanks to all who helped us join hands in the past season of many holidays by decorating an ornament for our Tree of the Village.

We participate in the Fine Arts Center's Gallery of Trees and Lights each year to create a symbol of the diversity of our community.

This year over 5,000 people visited the gallery, many of whom took the time to add their own decoration to this Citizens Project tree.

Human Relations Corner

The Pikes Peak Human Relations Coalition has selected three new Board members: Ron DeLeon, a Probation Officer for the Fourth Judicial District; Jose Ortega, a retired civil servant and long-time community activist; and Lynn Rhodes, a consultant for the Center for Creative Leadership.

Their experience and enthusiasm will greatly enhance the Board.

Representatives of the HRC spoke at the January 15th District 11 School Board meeting, in defense of the student publication policy already in place and against the "sexual conduct proposal" of Colorado for Family Values. See page 4.

An HRC task force has begun studying issues raised by advocates for the homeless community.

Create Community!

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Your voice for tolerance in the Pikes Peak region.

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Our Mission: Citizens Project is a grassroots organization in the Pikes Peak region dedicated to upholding the traditional American values of pluralism, freedom of religion and separation of church and state.

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